

SAM and THE BRAIN WAVE ADVENTURE



By Paula McCulloch, MIAPTP, MEIAP.
Illustrated by Philip Elliott

About Sam and the Brain Wave Adventure

This book has been produced by Epilepsy Ireland and written by our member Paula McCulloch, MIATP, MEAIP.

Paula is a qualified and practicing Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist and Play Therapist, and a mother of two. Her area of special interest is in the development of trauma-sensitive services for children across Ireland, and through her work she has developed what she terms ‘Therapeutic Procedural Preparation Stories’, stories designed with a trauma-sensitive perspective to help children predict, understand and manage medical interventions.

These stories are intended to serve as a creative and supportive way to prepare and reassure children before medical procedures. Paula believes that preparation through clear, child-centred communication is critical in supporting children undergoing medical interventions, helping to reduce distress and build a sense of safety and control.

Paula’s inspiration for this approach came from her son, Leo, whose curiosity and courage during his own experiences inspired the creation of Leo and the Brain Signal Quest (also available via Epilepsy Ireland). Together, they wanted to share this story in support of other children to know beforehand what happens during a sleep-deprived EEG, supporting psychological comfort and safety during this intervention. This led to further conversations on the need for a similar story for EEGs which do not require sleep deprivation – leading to the development of Sam and the Brain Wave Adventure.

Leo has chosen to donate this story to Epilepsy Ireland in appreciation of our work in supporting people with epilepsy and their families across Ireland.

Thank you to Paula and Leo for producing this story which we hope will help many children with epilepsy across Ireland and beyond. A huge thank you also to Philip Elliott for masterfully illustrating the story and for bringing it to life!

Remember – whether you are living with epilepsy or supporting a loved one with the condition, our services are here for you. If you need any information or support about epilepsy or want to learn more about the services we offer, visit www.epilepsy.ie, call us on 01 455 7500 or email us at info@epilepsy.ie and we will do our utmost to support you on your journey with the condition.

Together, we can achieve a society where no person’s life is limited by epilepsy.

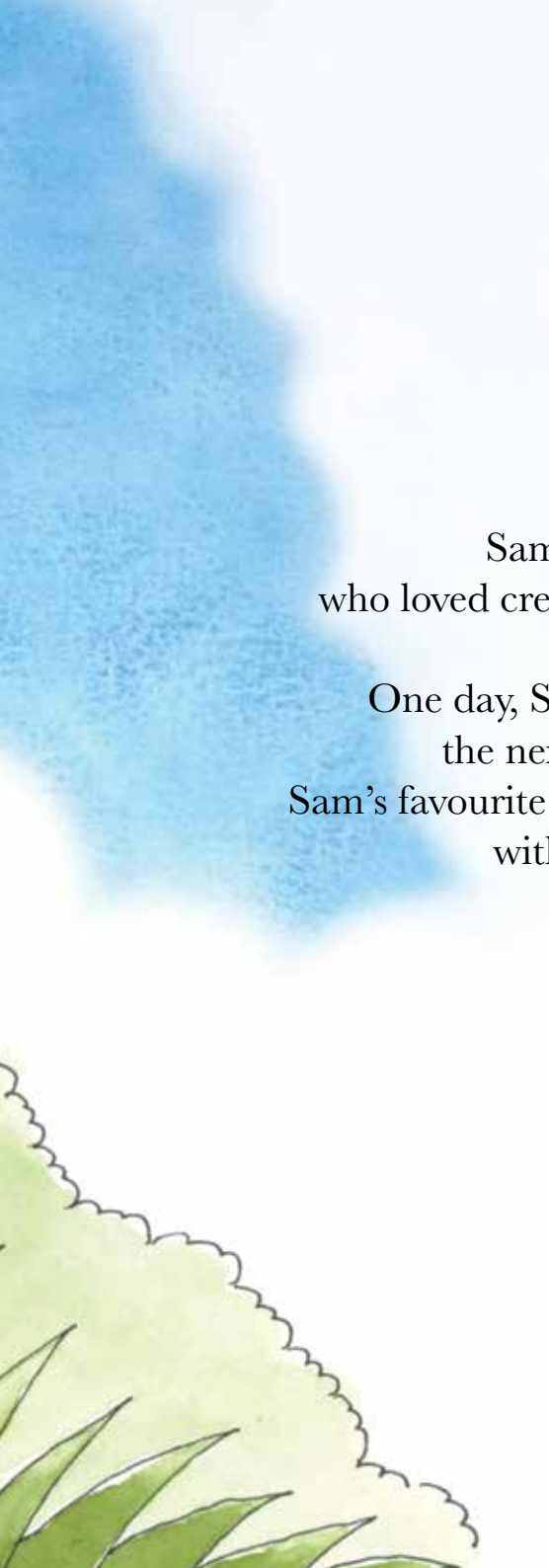
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Sam was a creative and curious kid
who loved creating adventures out of cardboard boxes.

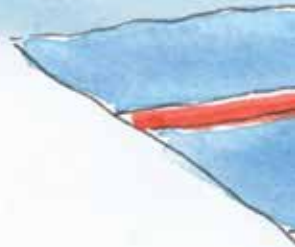
One day, Sam might be a pirate on the high seas,
the next, a daring explorer in the jungle.
Sam's favourite companion was Pip, a little stuffed dolphin
with soft blue fur, who joined Sam
on each adventure.

One morning, Sam's mom smiled and said,
"Guess what? Tomorrow we're going on a special adventure
to the hospital to see how your amazing brain works.
We'll meet a nurse who will do a test to help us understand
the seizures you've been having."

Sam's eyes grew wide. "Really? Will it make them go away?"

Mom hugged Sam gently. "It will help the doctors learn as much
as they can about what is going on in your brain, so that they can
get the right medicine to help you. It will be a bit like a treasure
hunt?" she giggled. "It's called an EEG."

"The doctors will use it to watch your brain's signals so they can
learn more about your brain during the times you're having those
different feelings," Dad added.







The next day, they packed Pip into a backpack
and set off for the hospital.

Walking through the door caused a wobble in Sam's tummy,
the hospital was big and smelled a bit like soap.

After a short time, a gentle nurse with a rainbow badge greeted
Sam. "Hi Sam! Are you ready to become a brain wave explorer?"

Sam squeezed Pip tight. "Will it hurt?"

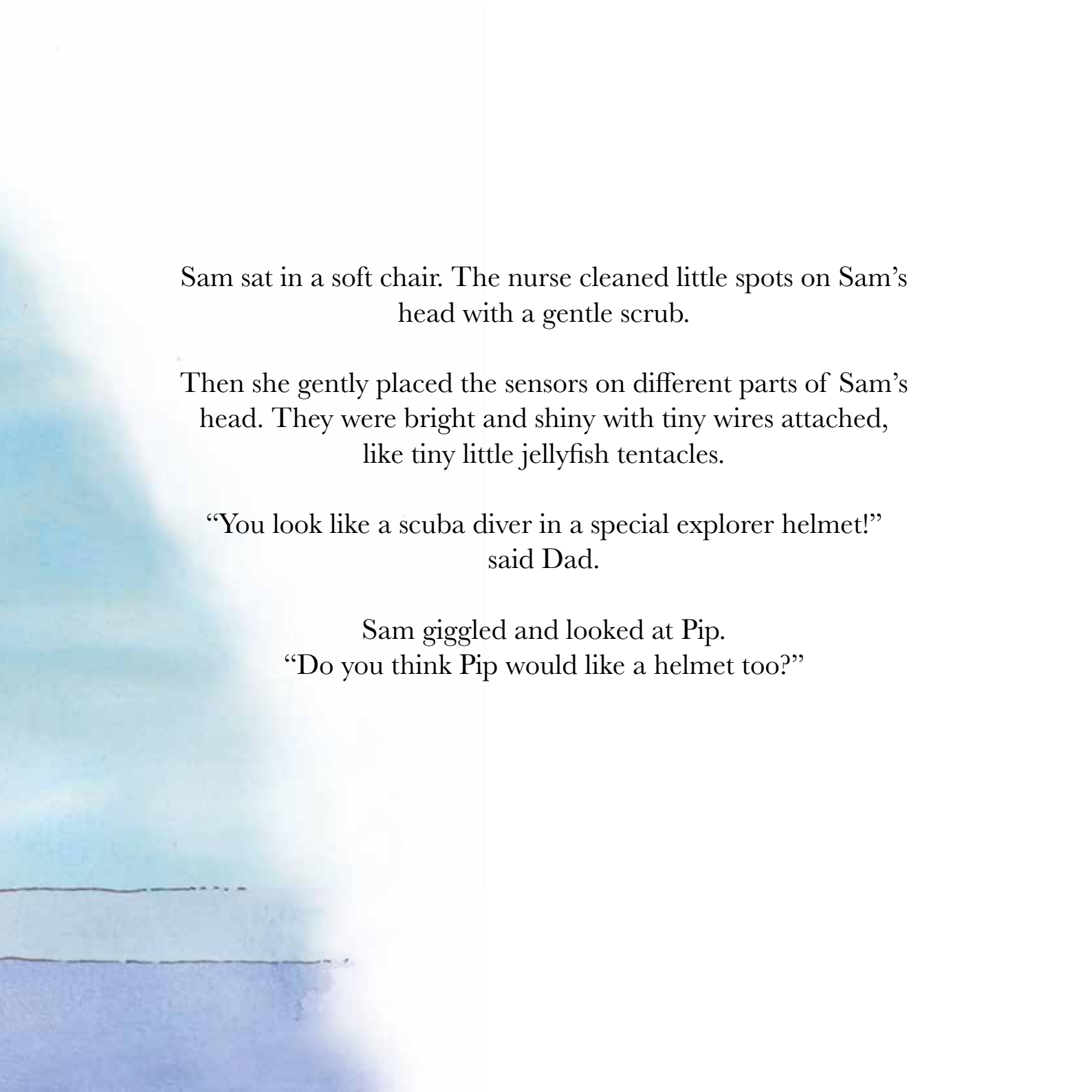
"Not at all," the nurse said with a kind smile.

"We'll just put some small sensors on your head.

They might feel cool and squishy, a bit like putting on tiny
plasters, but they won't hurt.

When they are on they will send messages to a computer
that will show the doctors the waves your brain makes,
almost like looking down at the oceans waves from up high
in an aeroplane."





Sam sat in a soft chair. The nurse cleaned little spots on Sam's head with a gentle scrub.

Then she gently placed the sensors on different parts of Sam's head. They were bright and shiny with tiny wires attached, like tiny little jellyfish tentacles.

“You look like a scuba diver in a special explorer helmet!”
said Dad.

Sam giggled and looked at Pip.
“Do you think Pip would like a helmet too?”

Once all the stickers were on, Sam settled back on a comfortable bed with Pip tucked under one arm. The nurse dimmed the lights a little, making the room feel cosy and quiet.

“We’re going to watch your brain waves while you rest and do some simple things,” she said. “Can you open and close your eyes when I say, and take some deep scuba diver breaths?” Sam nodded. It felt a little funny having all the wires attached, but also kind of magical, like secret waves were being sent through them out into the ocean.

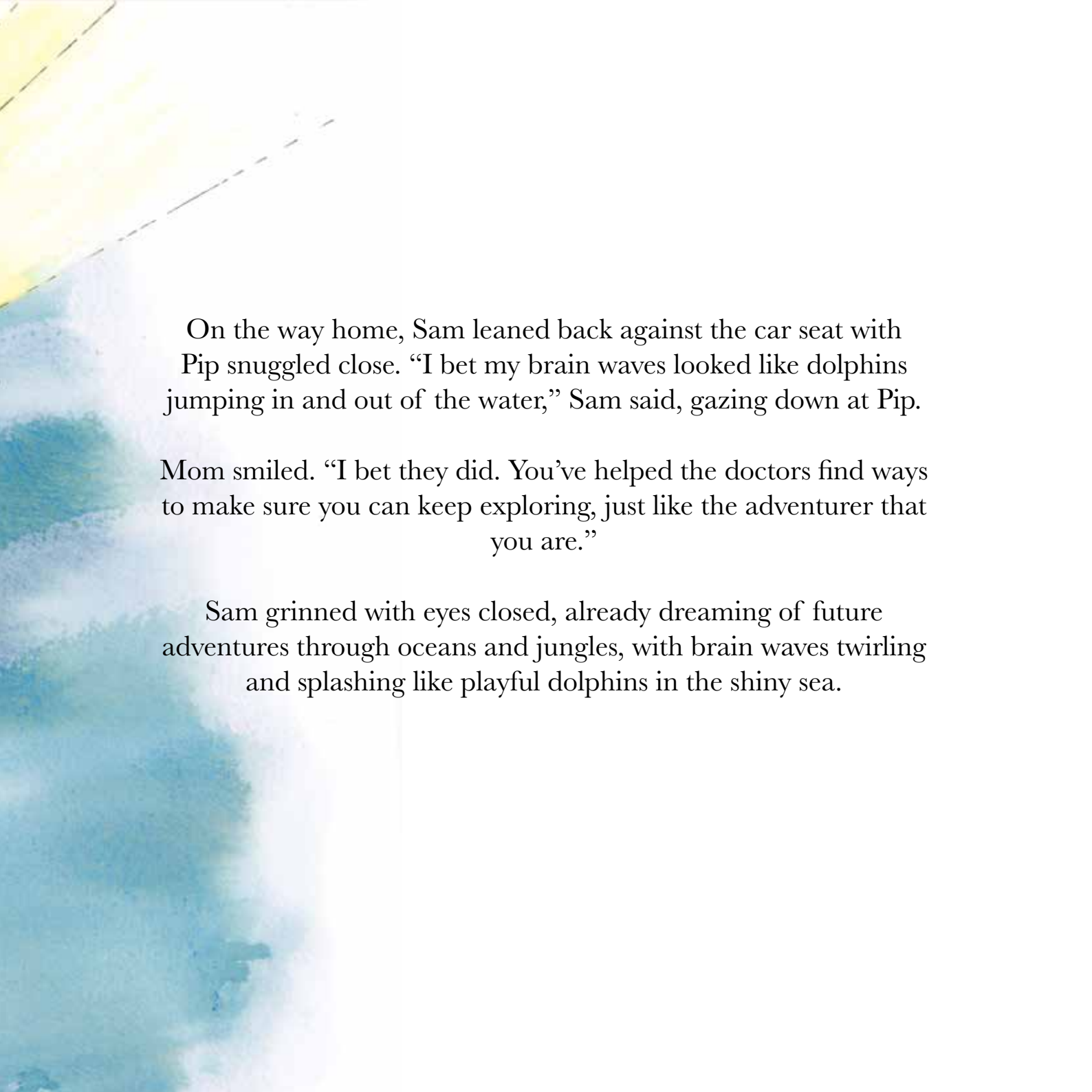
After a while, the nurse returned. “All done, brain wave explorer! You did amazing. Let’s take these stickers off, it might feel a bit tickly.”

Sam giggled as she removed each sticker. Then the nurse cleaned the bits of paste from Sam’s hair.

When they were finished, Mom and Dad gave Sam a big hug. “I’m so proud of you. Your bravery helped the doctors learn about what is going on in your brain.”







On the way home, Sam leaned back against the car seat with Pip snuggled close. “I bet my brain waves looked like dolphins jumping in and out of the water,” Sam said, gazing down at Pip.

Mom smiled. “I bet they did. You’ve helped the doctors find ways to make sure you can keep exploring, just like the adventurer that you are.”

Sam grinned with eyes closed, already dreaming of future adventures through oceans and jungles, with brain waves twirling and splashing like playful dolphins in the shiny sea.

